

# Indiana Department of Environmental Management

**Lori F. Kaplan, Commissioner**

*Text as prepared for:* Improving Kids Environment Conference

*Date presented:* November 7, 2001, 1:30 PM

*Location:* Sheraton Hotel, Keystone at the Crossing - Indianapolis

*(Text does not include verbatim comments)*

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## Introduction

It is my pleasure to be with you. I appreciate that you've asked me to say a few words about the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's perspective on lead and our preventative efforts.

- Lead poisoning is the **number one preventable disease** that affects children.
- As everyone here well knows, studies have concluded that childhood exposure to unsafe lead levels can cause learning disabilities, impaired growth, hyperactivity and brain damage.
- We know that children are not little adults. They eat more food, drink more water and breath more air per pound than adults, making them more susceptible to environmental threats such as lead.
- In pregnant women, lead exposure can pass through the body to the developing fetus and result in birth defects or miscarriages.
- According to our state Department of Health, one out of every nine children **tested** in Indiana has high blood lead levels.

## Agency Perspective

- In 1997, IDEM teamed up with Governor Frank O' Bannon's *Building Bright Beginnings Campaign* to make Indiana a safer place for all Hoosiers—especially children.

- Strategies of this **multi-agency campaign** are based on knowledge about early childhood brain development and its impact on children's lifelong healthy development.
- IDEM is building on Governor O' Bannon's campaign to protect children from environmental threats such as lead.
- We have incorporated lead education into many of our programs, including our 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program for Child Care Facilities.
- Every child care facility participating in this program receives a free lead assessment from IDEM. This free service has really made a difference in several child care facilities.

## Outreach

- You have heard a lot this morning about prevention.
- In 1998, IDEM, in partnership with the Indiana State Department of Health and the Marion County Health Department, launched the **nation's** first preventive pro-active approach to conquering lead poisoning in children—"2000 Safer Families for 2000 Lead Project." You will hear more details about this exciting, innovative project tomorrow.
- We trained more than 100 individuals as lead risk assessors who have performed more than 1,300 lead risk assessments for Hoosier families and child care facilities.
- Since the start of the 2000 Families project, we have paid for 54 health department, governmental and not-for-profit individuals to become licensed lead risk assessors through monies IDEM received from HUD.
- The goal of this outreach project was to provide simple steps parents could take to prevent their children from getting lead poisoning.

- Please come tomorrow to hear Tami Johnson and Paula Smith of IDEM present more detailed information regarding this project.

### **Office Efforts – Air, Land and Water**

- In February of 1999, our Office of **Air Quality** began Indiana's Lead-Based Paint Rule and received full EPA approval for the Lead-Based Paint Activity-Licensure Program on April 12, 2000. To date our air office has licensed the following personnel:

• inspectors	134
• risk assessors	136
• supervisors	77
• workers	6
• contractors	3
• training course providers	8

- A refresher course for lead-risk assessors is being offered during this conference. IDEM, through HUD dollars, is providing the funds to offer this training to all government agencies at no cost.

### **Office of Land Quality: Evansville Testing**

- Let me share with you one specific example of how IDEM has been working with a community to assist and educate residents living in an area with high lead levels in some soil samples.
- In July 2000, the City of Evansville contacted IDEM about concerns in the vicinity of an abandoned electroplating and metal finishing facility.
- IDEM took soil samples and found 40 properties with elevated lead levels in their soil.
- Since then, IDEM has conducted two more rounds of testing. During the most recent round, this past June, IDEM sampled a total of 175 surrounding properties. Some of these showed high lead levels.

- While we work with EPA to find a solution, we've teamed up with the state Department of Health, the Vanderburgh County Department of Health and EPA to educate residents about potential risks to them and their children.
- We've also provided extensive outreach to families on how they may protect their children from exposure in the interim.
- We're working with the residents and including them every step of the way.

### **Office of Water Quality**

- Our water quality office has been busy developing a plan to adopt a new rule that addresses lead in drinking water **and** a plan to implement and inform the public and assist drinking water suppliers regarding the upcoming rule.
- As you can tell, IDEM is working to address lead issues and continues to partner with the Health Department on Children's Environmental Health Issues.

### **Introduction of Margaret Sauser**

- It is my pleasure and honor to introduce our lunch speaker-Margaret Sauser.
- Margaret is the Executive Director of United Parents Against Lead (UPAL) of Michigan—but most importantly she is a mother.
- Margaret Sauser has been advocating for the prevention of childhood lead poisoning for more than six years.

- Since finding out that her own two boys were poisoned because of renovations of their 67 year-old home, Margaret has been on a mission to raise awareness and educate parents and others of the dangers of Lead.
- Ms. Sauser sits as a parent advisor on the Advisory Committee for Michigan's Childhood Lead Prevention Program.
- The United Parents Against Lead has worked with realtors on the local and national level.
- Her organization also works to educate homebuyers and renters of their rights and opportunities under the Lead Hazard Disclosure Act and the importance of lead-safe housing.
- Ms. Sauser works with Michigan's Children's Lead Prevention Program as an outreach educator. She is a Parent Advocate/Advisor for the Kent County Lead Clinic, Spectrum Health, EPA and HUD, Board of Realtors and other interested groups. She has made appearances on Kiplinger's Report on Lead Disclosure, a HUD instructional video, Editor's Notepad, a PBS program from Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, the Maury Povich show "Childhood Dangers Within the Home" and many other conferences and conventions.

Please join me in welcoming Margaret.